

Local RESTORE Council
April 14, 2014
Milton, Florida

Present: Chairman Lane Lynchard and members Jim Melvin, Donna Tucker, Brian Watkins, Dave Robau, Rob Williamson, and Buzz Eddy. Also present were the County Administrator (Hunter Walker), the County Engineer (Roger Blaylock), and the County Attorney (Angela Jones). Lynchard called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. in the Santa Rosa County Administrative Complex, Board Room.

Lynchard moved approval without objection of the February 10, 2014 meeting minutes.

Update on NRDA (Natural Resource Damage Assessment), RESTORE, Gulf Consortium, Other

Lynchard said he recently attended the Gulf Consortium meeting in Tallahassee. He said the Governor has made his appointments to the Consortium. Lynchard said the Consortium approved to advertise for RFP's (Request for Proposals) for consulting services. He said the Consortium still has no definitive funding source for its operation. Lynchard said it was noted that the next phase of the BP trial is scheduled to begin in January 2015. He said there is money in the pipeline and it is anticipated to start flowing towards the end of the year.

Jeff Helms (Atkins North America, Inc.) said he was out of town when Commissioner Jim Williamson passed away and wanted to offer his condolences to his family. He said it was an honor to know him.

Helms gave a power point presentation to the Council (Attachment in file). He further discussed the March 26, 2014 Gulf Consortium meeting and gave a list of the Consortium Governor appointees. He said Mike Sharp (Director, Gulf Environmental Benefit Fund) and Jennifer Fitzwater (FWCC Gulf Environmental Fund Director) gave presentations at this meeting (Attachment in file).

Walker discussed and gave an overview/update on the Santa Rosa Soundside project map (Attachment in file). Helms said this map gives an overall viewpoint on the direction of this project. Blaylock said that Audubon and Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission (FWC) have come to the consensus to move the extension and parking. He said Audubon takes exception to the boardwalks that were proposed in the original NRDA application. Blaylock said Audubon supports the parking and restrooms.

Walker gave an overview of the proposed presentation schedule for the future RESTORE Council meetings (Attachment in file). He said there may be other groups added to this schedule.

Williamson asked if the Council is going to utilize the feedback, of the presentations, to finalize the criteria. Lynchard said he envisions the Council approving the criteria. He said the presentations will be geared more towards what types of projects the presenters are considering or the type of projects they want the RESTORE Council to focus on. Walker said the RESTORE Council has discussed holding some of the meetings in other parts of the County. He said there are facilities available, for these meetings, in other areas of the County.

Helms said there will be a lion fish workshop beginning at 4:30 p.m. today at the Escambia County Central Office Complex. He said on April 22 there will be the RESTORE anniversary of the oil spill event. Lynchard said it is imperative for this council to keep pushing for more public awareness of what is going on in the southend of the County. He further discussed the Escribano Point and Navarre Beach Reefing site. He said the Board of Commissioners recently approved the installation of a reef camera at one of the offshore sites.

Walker said there will be a meeting setup by FWC on Wednesday, regarding NRDA reef projects.

Review of Draft Project Scoring Sheets – Economic Development

Helms gave an overview of the draft projects scoring sheet for economic development projects (Attachment in file). He further discussed the selection criteria and point scale. Helms said he will bring back sample projects for the Council to view.

Brice Harris (Haas Center) said he appreciates the opportunity to support Santa Rosa County on this very important project.

Lynchard said he feels more emphasis should be put on diversification in the scoring criteria. He said diversification is one of the particular things this Council talked about targeting. Lynchard said he feels it should be assigned more than 2 points. Williamson said he agrees with Lynchard. Robau said he also agrees with increasing diversity. There was further discussion regarding the allocation of points. Helms said he will increase the points for diversity and targeted industry. Eddy asked if this County envisions a grant or other funding coming through for economic development purposes. He said he feels it will be helpful to have a closing fund available for projects that may come forward. Helms said the Council will have to wait and see the final treasury guidelines. He said he feels it is important that the multi-year implementation plan shows the metrics for looking at projects and deciding the best projects Santa Rosa County. Walker asked about the amount of points allocated for training. Lynchard said he feels the points for training should decrease to 5 points and the others be split equally. He said option 2 should have the same number of points for targeted industry and diversification and split the other points up. Lynchard said he also feels a closing fund makes perfect sense.

Williamson asked about a claw back provision. Harris said this will be a phase after finalizing the selection criteria. He said the claw back provision will be bedded in the context of any standard contract between Santa Rosa County and the recipients of the funds. Harris said the claw back provisions can be structured in a number of different ways.

Review of Draft Project Scoring Sheets – Tourism

Helms gave an overview of the draft projects scoring sheet for tourism projects (Attachment in file). He further discussed the selection criteria and point scale. Helms said he is going to meet with Kate Wilkes (Tourist Development Council) to grade a few sample projects for the Council to review. Williamson said he feels the language under categories 2 and 3 seem a bit repetitive. He said he feels these two should be combined and raise the point level for the offseason/shoulder season tourism market. There was further discussion about the allocation of points for these criteria's.

Williamson asked Wilkes to clarify the types of tourism events in regards to the third criteria. Wilkes said the Beaches to Woodlands, will be most of the events, which are local events put on by local people. Tucker said the more events the County can acquire, the more demand and growth the County will see. She said the County needs to support in-season events as well as the shoulder season events. Helms said once Navarre gets the anticipated hotel, this will attract more visitors. Tucker said this is a very important area for growth. Wilkes said the County cannot forget the summer season because this is the season of guaranteed income. Robau asked if there is another methodology for capturing room nights other than the room block method. Helms said one way to measure this would be through the bed tax at the end of the year.

Public Forum

Sonja Negley said she has rewritten the grant for the sound side project. She said with input from Audubon, this project has been reduced to two walkovers eliminating the walkover going through the bird season incubation area. Negley said the location of the two walkovers will not disturb any of the birding areas. She said this area is a heavily traveled, public beach access area where the dunes are being destroyed. Blaylock said according to the map, the project has been reduced to one walkover. Williamson asked if this NRDA project is compatible with the discovery center project. Negley said yes. She said she feels it is important that there are heads in beds in the shoulder season, but most importantly during any season. Negley said the two biggest concepts of tourism are separating the guests from their time and their money. She said she is in favor of the Escribano Point project, but there was other impact in the County directly on the Gulf. Negley said she would like the Council to please consider some type of bonus

structure for the projects that are at the site of impact. She said this County has one beach and it supplies a great deal of economic impact.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Council at this time, the meeting adjourned.

By: Lane Lynchard, Chairman